

## Agriculture in Rhode Island

The face of American agriculture is changing - more rapidly now than ever before. From a team of horses and a good memory in the early 1900s to tractors with the power of 40 to 300 horses and computers with spreadsheets. Today, American farmers provide consumers with better quality food at a lower price. U.S. consumers spend roughly 9 percent of their income on food compared with 11 percent in the United Kingdom, 17 percent in Japan, 27 percent in South Africa, and 53 percent in India.

Agriculture in RI has changed a lot in the last 25 years. We have seen the conversion of potato fields to turf, the emergence of multi-crop farming as the mainstay vs. the exception. We have seen the transformation of the family farm to the family farm enterprise. We have seen our aquaculture industry make great strides toward increased size and production. We have seen our nursery and horticultural industry come to full bloom representing over 66% percent of the agricultural value in our state. We have seen the transformation of our farms from wholesalers to astute retailers, featuring Pick-You-Own of all types of crops. We have seen our farmers utilize agri-tourism concepts along with dramatic increases in farmers markets, roadside stands and other forms of direct marketing. In all the last 25 years have probably produced the most dramatic changes in our State's agriculture industry than any other preceding period.

### Did you know that:

That RI is the largest turf grass producing state in New England.

Or

\*That the value of RI farm sales of fresh fruits and vegetables sold directly from the farm to consumers (via farmers markets, roadside stands etc.) is second in the nation at approximately \$20,541 per farm. (Based on 180 direct market locations statewide.)

Or

\*That there are over 858 farms in our state of which 80 percent are family run. RI farms are custodians of over 61,000 acres of land.

Or

\*That RI agricultural operations gross over 100 million dollars per year which translates into a return of over 48 million dollars directly back to the Rhode Island economy in farm production expenses, and over 13% of all employment in RI has a direct or indirect connection to agriculture.

Or

\*That RI ranks 4th in the nation for its value of production per acre at \$1,095.00 and 8th in net farm income per acre at \$163.00.

Or

That the foundation for all horse breeding in the United States was established in Rhode Island as early as 1676 followed by the establishment of the American Poultry Industry in 1854.

Or

\*That the horticultural industry (floriculture, nurseries, sod and greenhouse production) account for over 66% of RI agricultural income.

\*Taken from the 2002 Census of Agriculture USDA - NASS

# Rhode Island Agriculture Day

May 17, 2006

State House



Sponsored By:  
The Rhode Island Department of  
Environmental Management  
Division of Agriculture



## Exhibitors

RI DEM/Division of Agriculture  
235 Promenade Street - Suite 370  
Providence, RI 02908

RI Dairy Farms Cooperative  
1786 Main Road  
Tiverton, RI 02878

Kenyon Corn Meal Co.  
P.O. Box 221  
West Kingston, RI 02892

Earth Day RI, Suite 330  
235 Promenade Street  
Providence, RI 02908

Ocean State Aquaculture Association  
P.O. Box 188  
Peace Dale, RI 02883

Little Rhody Farms  
Div. of Little Rhody Foods  
67 Cucumber Hill Road  
Foster, RI 02825

URI Master Gardners Association  
3 East Alumni Avenue  
Kingston, RI 02881

RI Farm Bureau  
2227 Plainfield Pike Rear  
Johnston, RI 02919

RI Rural Development Council / RIRCD  
35 Belver Avenue Suite 117  
North Kingstown, RI 02852

Agri-Mark Dairy Cooperative/  
Cabot Cheese  
P.O. Box 5800  
Lawrence, MA 01842

Swiss Village Farm Foundation  
152 Harrison Avenue  
Newport, RI 02840

Confreda Farms & Greenhouses  
2150 Scituate Avenue  
Hope, RI 02831

Charlie's Sugarhouse  
124 Hall Road  
Greene, RI 02827

RI DEM/Div. of Forest Environment  
2185 Putnam Pike  
Chepachet, RI 02814

RI Center for Agricultural Promotion  
& Education  
235 Promenade St. Room 370  
Providence, RI 02908

RI State Grange  
460-B Long Highway  
Little Compton, RI 02837

RI/DEM Strategic Planning & Policy  
235 Promenade Street, Suite 330  
Providence, RI 02908

Dave's Marketplace  
1599 Warwick Avenue  
Warwick, RI 02889

Frerich's Farm/ Southern New England  
Giant Pumpkin Growers Association  
43 Kinnicutt Avenue  
Warren, RI 02885

URI Cooperative Extension  
Home \*A\* Syst  
1 Greenhouse Road, 105 CIK Bldg.  
Kingston, RI 02881

RI Sod Producers  
P.O. Box 2  
Slocum, RI 02877

## Exhibitors

URI College of the Environmental and  
Life Sciences, Cooperative Extension  
9 East Alumni Avenue Suite 7  
Kingston, RI 02881

Farm to School/ Farm Fresh RI  
Box 1943  
Providence, RI 02912

RI Nursery and Landscape Assn., Inc.  
64 Bittersweet Drive  
Seekonk, MA 02771

RI Conservation Districts  
17 Smith Avenue  
Greenville, RI 02828

Southside Community Land Trust  
109 Somerset Street  
Providence, RI 02907

RI Future Farmers of America (FFA)  
245 South Pier Road  
Narragansett, RI 02882

Rhode Island Beekeepers Association  
140 Coldbrook Road  
Warwick, RI 02888

USDA Farm Service Agency  
60 Quaker Lane, Suite 40  
Warwick, RI 02886

## Speakers

**W. Michael Sullivan, Ph. D,**  
**Director**  
**RI Department of Environmental**  
**Management**  
**Master of Ceremonies**

**Honorable Governor Carcieri**  
**State of Rhode Island**

**Saul Kaplan, Acting Executive**  
**Director, RI Economic**  
**Development Corporation**

**Donald Minto, Beef Producer**  
**Watson Farm**  
**Jamestown, RI**

**Senator Susan Sosnowski,**  
**Vegetable Farmer, South**  
**Kingstown, RI**

**Senator Kevin Breene, Dairy**  
**Farmer, West Greenwich, RI**

**Representative**  
**Eileen S. Naughton**  
**Warwick, RI**

## What is Agriculture Day?

The Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management, along with local farmers, agricultural associations, corporations, universities, and government agencies believe that every Rhode Islander should understand how food and fiber products are produced, and should value the essential role agriculture contributes to our states economy and quality of life. Rhode Island Agriculture Day, which we are celebrating on this May 17th, is a day to honor the people who work to provide us with safe, abundant and affordable agricultural products. It is a day to focus public attention on our states agricultural industry and to educate our citizens on the many ways agriculture touches their lives each day.